

**ILLINOIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO
THE U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS
MEETING MINUTES**

October 14, 2016

The Illinois Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (Committee) convened via conference call to discuss a project proposal to study voting rights concerns in the State. Juan Carlos Linares chaired the meeting according to the agenda items identified. The DFO performed a roll call of committee members present. The meeting was open to the public and took place from 12:00 PM to 12:45 PM CDT.

State Advisory Committee Members:

Present:

1. Juan Carlos Linares (Chair)
2. Joanna Bohdziewicz-Borowiec
3. William Howard
4. Sweta Shah
5. James Botana
6. Kendric Cobb
7. Trevor Copeland
8. Richard Garcia
9. Bryant Jackson-Green
10. Reyahd Kazmi
11. Malik Nevels

Absent:

1. Johnathan Bean
2. Cindy Buys
3. Evelyn Rodriguez
4. Anne Wortham
5. Tabassum Haleem

Commission Staff present:

- Melissa Wojnaroski (DFO)
- Victoria Moreno, USCCR intern
- Olivia Wilks, USCCR intern

Members of the Public present:

- None identified

Meeting Notes/Decisions Made:

Approval of Minutes

- Trevor Copeland moved to approve the Committee's meeting minutes as drafted from August 23, 2016
- Richard Garcia seconded the motion and the motion was approved unanimously by a voice vote

Voting Rights Project Review

1. The Committee reviewed a draft project proposal to study voting rights in the state (attached).
2. Discussion
 - a. In the interest of capturing all potential concerns that may surface during the current presidential election (November 2016), the Committee amended the final bullet point on page 6 to strike the words "such as" and replace with "including but not exclusive to"

- b. Through verbal discussion the Committee clarified that under bullet point 6 on page 6, studying concerns of access to voting for individuals with disabilities may include physical barriers (such as wheelchair accessible polling places, etc.), as well as those requiring supportive accommodations (such as those who are visually impaired or blind and those requiring assistance reading, etc.)
 - c. Through verbal discussion, the Committee clarified that their focus is on access to voting for those who choose to do so. Disproportionately low voter participation from any protected demographic is not necessarily by itself indicative of voter discrimination, since some people may choose not to vote.
 - d. The Committee also verbally discussed the importance of considering evidence and testimony regarding both: (1) potential barriers to voting; and (2) concern over the integrity of voting, such that incidence of voter fraud does not unduly dilute or skew the will of the electorate.
- 3. Approval of Project Proposal
 - a. Joanna Bohdziewicz-Borowiec moved to approve the project proposal as amended in discussion point 2(a) above.
 - b. Richard Garcia seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote

Timeline

- The Committee will meet next in November 2016. Committee members should be prepared to discuss:
 - Potential locations for a hearing
 - Potential panelists to provide testimony regarding voting rights in Illinois
- The Committee aims to hold a hearing in late January or early February 2017, after the pending presidential election.
- The Committee aims to complete their report on the project by June or July 2017.

Open Comment

At the conclusion of the meeting, public lines were opened for comment. No public comment was received.

Next meeting

Friday November 18th 2016 at 12pm CST

Meeting Adjourned

1:00 PM CDT